

Message Text

SECRET

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FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
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S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 ISLAMABAD 13227

NODIS CHEROKEE

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM BYROADE

1. AFTER REVIEWING MORE THOROUGHLY THAN I WAS ABLE TO EARLIER ALL THE NUANCES AND IMPLICATIONS OF BHUTTO'S CHRISTMAS EVE DISCUSSION WITH ME, I'VE CONCLUDED THAT WE ARE CLOSER TO THE POSSIBILITY OF MAKING A DEAL, IN TIME, WITH BHUTTO ON THE REPROCESSING ISSUE THAN I HAD PREVIOUSLY REPORTED. (ISLAMABAD 13074.) IN LIGHT OF THIS, I WANT TO REQUEST YOUR HELP, USING THE EXPERTISE OF THOSE IN THE CURRENT ADMINISTRATION WHO ARE FAMILIAR WITH THE HISTORY OF HOW WE GOT WHERE NOW ARE, IN WORKING OUT THE ELEMENTS OF A POSSIBLE PACKAGE DEAL.

2. MY JUDGEMENT IS THAT BHUTTO IS IN THE PROCESS OF ACCEPTING AS A FACT THAT HE WILL NOT BE ABLE TO GET THE REPROCESSING PLANT. I COULD BE WRONG ON THIS AS HE HAS NOT MADE THAT ADMISSION DIRECTLY TO ME AND I CAN WELL UNDERSTAND HIS REASONS FOR NOT WANTING TO DO SO AT THIS TIME. BUT HE DID IN FACT COME VERY CLOSE TO TIPPING HIS HAND WITH ME IN OUR CHRISTMAS EVE TALK. AT ONE POINT HE STARTED TO SPELL OUT THE MILITARY AND ECONOMIC AGREEMENTS HE WOULD LIKE TO WORK OUT WITH US WHEN THE TIME CAME. HE MENTIONED THE A-7S WITH FMS CREDITS PERTAINING THERETO AND POSSIBLY TO CERTAIN OTHER THINGS, AND THEN ABRUPTLY STOPPED WITH AN EXPRESSION THAT I INTERPRETED TO BE A
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RECOGNITION THAT HE WAS COMING VERY CLOSE TO TELLING ME HE WOULD MAKE A DEAL WHEN THE TIME CAME THAT WOULD DO AWAY WITH THE REPROCESSING ISSUE. (IN THE REALM OF PURE SPECULATION, BUT PEGGED SOMEWHAT TO BHUTTO'S MORE DEFINITE POSITION ON "DELAY" AS REPORTED IN THE REFTTEL, I AM LEFT WONDERING WHETHER THE FRENCH, AND PERHAPS EVEN

THE SHAH, KNOW NOW THAT BHUTTO WILL AGREE TO A REASONABLE WAY OUT AFTER HIS ELECTIONS BUT HAVE PLEDGED TO PROTECT HIM PUBLICLY, AND WITH US, UNTIL AFTER THE BALLOTING IS OVER.)

3. I HOPE THAT THE DILEMMA POSED BY THESE UPCOMING ELECTIONS WILL BE UNDERSTOOD AT HOME. I THINK THAT WE MUST RECOGNIZE AND ACCEPT THE VALIDITY OF BHUTTO'S CONTENTION THAT IT IS SIMPLY NOT POLITICALLY FEASIBLE FOR HIM TO MAKE SUCH A DEAL, INVOLVING AS IT WOULD SOME FORM OF PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT OF A STEPDOWN, BEFORE THE VOTING TAKES PLACE IN MARCH. I KNOW THAT THERE ARE SOME WHO WILL ARGUE THAT BHUTTO HAS NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT FROM THE PAK ELECTORATE. I DON'T MYSELF DOUBT THAT HE WILL WIN. BUT THE HARD POLITICAL REALITY IS THAT ANY PUBLIC CLIMBDOWN, HOWEVER PHRASED AND "SWEETENED", COULD WELL CHANGE THE WHOLE COMPLEXION OF THE CAMPAIGN. IT WOULD GIVE THE OPPOSITION THE POPULAR ISSUE TO USE AGAINST BHUTTO THEY HAVE UP TILL NOW BEEN VAINLY SEEKING. WE KNOW FROM OUR OWN SOUNDINGS HOW POTENT SUCH AN ISSUE CAN BE, PARTICULARLY IN THE PUNJAB HEARTLAND, WHERE THE REPROCESSING PLANT IS SEEN IN TERMS OF NATIONAL PRESTIGE AND NATIONAL SECURITY VIS-A-VIS NUCLEAR INDIA. WE HAVE EVERY REASON TO BELIEVE THAT BHUTTO WOULD TAKE ALL MEASURES HE CONSIDERED NECESSARY TO WARD OFF THE CHALLENGE THE OPPOSITION WILL SEEK TO DEVELOP ON THIS ISSUE, INCLUDING STEPS (E.G. THE JAILING OF THE MORE OUTSPOKEN AND EFFECTIVE OF THE OPPOSITION LEADERS) WHICH COULD LEAD TO THE QUESTIONING OF THE LEGITIMACY OF HIS EVENTUAL ELECTION VICTORY. (HE MIGHT ALSO CHOOSE TO POSTPONE THE ELECTION A LA INDIRA. THIS SECRET

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WOULD LEAVE HIM OPEN TO CHARGES THAT HE HAD CAPITULATED IN A FLAGRANT DEAL AGAINST THE BEST SECURITY INTERESTS OF PAKISTAN AND COULD NOT FACE THE ELECTORATE. IF ANYTHING, IT WOULD BE WORSE FROM OUR INTERESTS AND PROBABLY FROM HIS.) BHUTTO WOULD STILL STAND TO SUFFER POLITICAL DAMAGE IN A POST-ELECTION CLIMBDOWN, BUT THAT WOULD TAKE PLACE IN A MUCH LESS VOLATILE ATMOSPHERE AND COULD BE MORE EFFECTIVELY DEALT WITH IN THE WAKE OF THE EXPECTED MASSIVE RENEWAL OF HIS POPULAR MANDATE.

4. IF BHUTTO CONTINUES TO TAKE THE POSITION THE HE CANNOT GO PUBLIC BEFORE THE ELECTIONS ARE OUT OF THE WAY -- AND IF WE PUSH HIM ANY FURTHER THAN I HAVE ON THIS HE MAY WELL CONCLUDE THAT WE ARE NOT CONCERNED ABOUT HIS POLITICAL POSITION -- THAT DOESN'T MEAN THAT NEGOTIATIONS CAN'T BE INITIATED WELL BEFORE THAT ON THE TERMS OF A PACKAGE DEAL INVOLVING A JOINT FRENCH-PAK ANNOUNCEMENT OF A MORE OR LESS INDEFINITE POSTPONEMENT OF THE REPROCESSING PLANT

AND FRENCH/US ASSISTANCE IN MEETING PAKISTAN'S CONVENTIONAL

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S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 ISLAMABAD 13227

NODIS CHEROKEE

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM BYROADE

ARMS AND NUCLEAR ENERGY REQUIREMENTS. I RECOGNIZE THAT THERE ARE THOSE IN THE BUREAUCRACY WHO HAVE ALREADY SPOKEN OF SUCH A DEAL AS A FORM OF BLACKMAIL. I'M SURE THAT YOU ESPECIALLY ARE INTRIGUED BY THE PROPOSITION THAT GIVING SOMETHING TO GET SOMETHING OF GREAT IMPORTANCE IS AN EVIL PROCESS. BUT LEAVING LOADED WORDS ASIDE, I THINK THAT A VERY LEGITIMATE CASE CAN BE MADE NOT ONLY (1) THAT PAKISTAN HAS A REAL NEED FOR THE CONVENTIONAL ARMS, E.G. A-7S, AND ASSISTANCE IN NUCLEAR ENERGY DEVELOPMENT LIKELY TO BE PART OF SUCH A PACKAGE, BUT ALSO THAT (2) THE RENUNCIATION OF THE REPROCESSING PLANT, PUBLICLY ADVERTISED AS IMPORTANT TO PAKISTAN'S POWER GENERATING POTENTIAL AND WIDELY REGARDED HERE AS NECESSARY FOR PAK SECURITY, ENHANCES THIS NEED BOTH IN TERMS OF COMPENSATION FOR WHAT HAS BEEN LOST AND IN THE CONTEXT OF BHUTTO'S POLITICAL WELL-BEING.

5. AS BHUTTO WEIGHS THE APPRECIATION OF THE DILEMMA HE IS IN (NOW REINFORCED BY HIS FORTUITOUS DISCUSSION WITH THE SHAH) HE MIGHT COME TO THE CONCLUSION THAT HIS BEST BET WOULD BE TO NEGOTIATE A DEAL NOW WITH US QUITE SECRETLY AND LET THE INCOMING ADMINISTRATION KNOW THROUGH US THAT THE PROBLEM WAS SOLVABLE AND WOULD NOT BE THE OCCASION FOR AN IMMEDIATE PAK-US CONFRONTATION. IDEALLY, OF COURSE, IT WOULD BE BEST IF A DEAL COULD BE NEGOTIATED WHICH WOULD HAVE THE ENDORSEMENT OF THE INCOMING ADMINISTRATION.

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ISTRAION, WITH THE OBVIOUS ADVANTAGE TO THE NEW ADMINISTRATION OF ACQUIESCING IN A PACKAGE WORKED OUT BY THE OUTGOING ONE. WHAT I WOULD HOPE YOU WOULD CONSIDER IS THE DEVELOPMENT OF A POSSIBLE PACKAGE AND YOUR DISCUSSING IT AS SOON AS YOU CAN WITH THE INCOMING ADMINISTRATION. (HAL SONNENFELDT TOLD ME JUST BEFORE I LEFT THAT WORK WOULD PROCEED ON SUCH A PACKAGE, BUT I FEAR THAT THAT MIGHT NOW BE CONSIDERED UNNECESSARY IN VIEW OF MY LAST MESSAGE INDICATING THAT BHUTTO WAS NOT LIKELY TO MOVE ON THIS ISSUE BEFORE THE ELECTIONS.) YOU CAN PRESENT THIS IN CONTEXT BETTER THAN ANYONE ELSE IN VIEW OF YOUR OWN PRIVATE TALKS WITH BHUTTO, YOUR OWN FEELINGS AS TO THE IMPORTANCE OF CONTINUING GOOD US-PAK RELATIONS, THE GEO-POLITICAL IMPORTANCE OF PAKISTAN, AND HOW WHAT WE DO HERE INFLUENCES OUR POSITION WITH CHINA AND THE PERSIAN GULF NATIONS, PARTICULARLY PAKISTAN'S CLOSE FRIENDS THE SAUDIS AND IRANIANS. I WOULD HOPE THE NEW ADMINISTRATION WOULD WELCOME THE ENCOURAGING WORD THAN A DEAL ON THE BASIS OF YOUR PACKAGE HAS BECOME A DISTINCT POSSIBILITY. I COULD SEE THEM ADOPTING IT, OR SOME VERSION OF IT, AS THE STARTING POINT FOR SECRET NEGOTIATIONS DURING THE MONTHS LEADING UP TO THE PAK ELECTIONS. (AN ADDED DIVIDEND OF NEGOTIATIONS TAKING PLACE DURING THE PAK ELECTION CAMPAIGN IS THAT THIS WOULD ENCOURAGE BHUTTO TO KEEP QUIET ON THE ISSUE, AND GENERALLY TO DEAL KINDLY WITH THE US. THERE WOULD, AS ALWAYS, BE THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE FACT OF THE NEGOTIATIONS COULD LEAK, BUT SUCH LEAKS COULD BE CONVINCINGLY DENIED IN THE ABSENCE OF ANY NEED FOR CONGRESSIONS DISCLOSURE AT THAT TIME.)

6. IF SUCH A PACKAGE CAN BE DEvised, I NEED TO HAVE IT HERE AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE. I WOULD, OF COURSE, NOT DISCLOSE IT PER SE TO BHUTTO. BUT HAVING A GENERAL BALL PARK IDEA OF WHAT IS FEASIBLE, I WOULD BE IN A POSITION TO DISCOURAGE ANY EXCESSIVE EXPECTATION, IF BHUTTO SHOULD INDICATE HE WANTS TO START SERIOUS NEGOTIATIONS. SHOULD YOU HOWEVER SUCCEED IN ADVANCE AGREEMENT ON ITS TERMS WITH THE NEW ADMINISTRATION, I COULD THEN RECEIVE EXPLICIT INSTRUCTIONS TO TRY TO FINALIZE IT WITH BHUTTO.

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7. BHUTTO IS NOT THAT IMPRESSED WITH OUR FORMAL ARGUMENTS -- HE HAD AN ANSWER FOR ALMOST ALL THE TALKING POINTS I CARRIED BACK TO HIM FROM THE DEPARTMENT -- BUT HE IS SERIOUSLY CONCERNED OVER THE POSITION HE IS IN WITH US AND OTHERS OVER THE REPROCESSING DEAL. IN THIS CONTEXT, IT IS CENTRAL TO KEEP IN MIND THAT WHILE WE ARE ASKING BHUTTO TO GIVE UP THE OPTION OF FOLLOWING INDIA'S ROUTE IN THE NUCLEAR FIELD, WE MUST OFFER SOME ELEMENTS OF ASSISTANCE IN BUILDING A CONVENTIONAL DEFENSE. YOU FULLY UNDERSTAND THIS EQUATION AND ARE UNIQUELY POSITIONED TO

CONVEY THAT UNDERSTANDING TO THE NEW TEAM WHICH MAY NOT
INITIALLY APPRECIATE ITS IMPORTANCE.

8. I RECOGNIZE THAT WITH A TRANSITION IN WASHINGTON AND AN ELECT-
ION COMING UP IN PAKISTAN, THIS IS ONE HELL OF A TIME TO TRY TO
DEAL WITH AN ISSUE AS SENSITIVE AND IMPORTANT AS THIS ONE HAS
BECOME. BUT I HOPE, IF YOU POSSIBLY CAN, THAT YOU WILL AGREE THAT
WE GET OURSELVES IN POSITION TO BE ABLE TO MAKE THE BEST
POSSIBLE TRY.
BYROADE

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